

255 stand up, and fall down continuously, sometimes on their hands and sometimes on their behinds. They walk on all fours getting so used [487] to it that when they are grown up they catch up with the best runners in this way. [405]

[157] Sometimes the Caribs make incisions to cure some inflammation, but most of the time they do it out of fantasy. It is said that the children are gashed instead of being whipped, but I have not seen it done often. [435]

515 The Caribs have no other paternoster than the flute. The first [531] one to awake at the cock's crow plays his flute, and the others imitate him as they awaken. After this they go to bathe in the river. The women and children go at a different time. Because the river is cold they make fires by groups in two or three places where they warm themselves. If they are soaked by sea water or rain, or if they are dirty or overheated by some exertion, they return to wash themselves again. Besides this they never fail to go bathing at noon and in the evening. I think that these baths contribute the most to the preservation of their health, and so do their fasts when they are moderate. [383] The children in order to learn how to swim and become accustomed to the ocean waves, as well as to amuse themselves, lay on small planks. They let themselves drift against the breakers and are driven back into the mouth of a river. Others who are stronger let themselves drift with the current of the river and meet the breakers which are rough and frightening where the river hits them, particularly in the district of cabester [sic] where the sea is rougher and the streams are faster. And when they see someone upside down in the waves, or standing there, they laugh to see them when we would be fearful. [314]

257 The Carib children, having prepared birdlime, cut long poles and [223] attach at the end a very pliable rod which has been smeared with glue. They hold it so that the end is near the flowers where the humming birds find their food. When these birds are not watchful, they hit them with the small rod and having been touched with this rod they remain stuck. The children run quickly, seize them, and tear off the glued feathers, [439] gut the birds, and wrap them in leaves. They dry them in the fire and trade them to the French for hooks and pins. [220] One type of fly makes [262] holes in the sand to live there. The small Caribs kill them, split them in half, and pick out a small sac filled with honey which they eat. [398] The children make horns out of the stem of a certain plant [466], and [534] the men make whistles out of the leg bones of pelicans. [267]

23/they will not eat even a single egg. Perhaps they are no longer so disgusted by them. [290] The word for dog is chou-chou. The dogs of the Caribs in the beginning were medium sized, had upright ears like foxes, and were raised to hunt agoutis and lizards. These dogs could not stand us because of our clothes. Now the Caribs take any kind of dog they can get. [166]

224 The Caribs hunt agoutis with the same eagerness that the French hunt hares. The agouti has the head of a rat, with rough hair on his hind quarters which stands up when he is frightened. His tail is smaller and shorter than that of a rabbit. His color is brown, bordering on black. He eats sitting up like a squirrel and holds food in his front paws. When the agouti is chased by dogs, he hides in the hollow of a tree like in a fort, but the Caribs set fire at the entrance to smoke him out, and the dogs catch him when he runs out.

252 When the meat is fresh the taste is too gamy, but the flavor improves when it is kept until the next day and is salted. The Caribs prepare it by roasting and expose the meat to smoke. Then they wrap it up in leaves and keep it as long as they wish. The meat dries up like leather. Nevertheless, it softens when boiled for a long time in manioc water, and it makes good food for the Caribs who eat almost no other land animal. [430]

● 223 The Caribs know the trees where parrots have their nest. They go to catch them when they are downy. They cage them and then teach them how to speak and whistle. [218] The Caribs do not yet use stairs, steps, or ladders. Yet they are able to climb everywhere. I have seen some grab hold on a tree with their two hands and put the soles of their feet against the tree. This requires great strength. Possibly they don't all climb in this way. [205]

48/ 226 The Caribs are watchful, but it is only to go out at night for crabs, or to shoot fish from the rocks, in order to provide for the next day. They only collect provisions for one day, so that should anyone come late, they will scarcely find a piece of cassava to give him. [297] The Caribs hunt crabs at night with torches. [367] Crabs are tied in pairs along five or six sticks. The Caribs hold them by the ends and this makes up the load of one man. [129]

When the Caribs sail along the coasts and see lobsters at the bottom of the sea they dive in from the canoe with a rock in order to go more easily to the bottom. Having seized the lobster they drop the stone and bring up their catch, sometimes getting their nose filled

- 224 Ciriques, a yellow-and-black species of land crab common in and around the reserve, make a very palatable dish. The green sperm of the male cirique is one of the ingredients of the typical Carib sauce, [263] *toumalin* or *tumali*. They are usually caught at night with the aid of flambeaux. The Caribs sometimes obtain salt from the roasted and

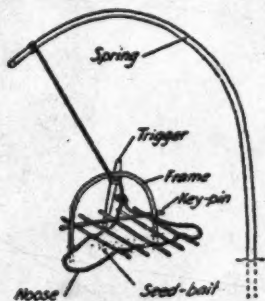


FIGURE 36.—Spring snare for game birds.

ground-up shells of these crustaceans by maceration and subsequent evaporation. Another and odd species of land crab, abounding in the woods and sometimes eaten by the Caribs, is the so-called soldier crab. When small, he finds and takes possession of a vignot, or river periwinkle's shell, exchanging this when he grows larger for that of a bugau (a snail-like sea shellfish), and that again, perhaps, for a lambi or conque shell. Scuttling along among the leaves, a seashell on their backs, their one claw sticking out behind and their two hairy horns in

front, these "soldiers" present a truly comical appearance. Like the black crab of the leeward coast, the soldier is a great traveler, and at certain seasons battalions of them are to be seen on the march, going down to or up from the sea.

Iguana lizards are not uncommon in some parts of the woods. They have a delicate flesh whose taste resembles that of chicken. They are

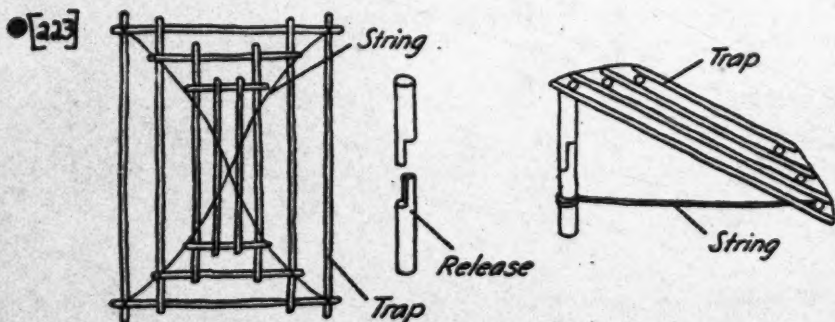


FIGURE 37.—Fall trap.

found on the branches of trees, hypnotized by whistling, and caught with a running noose tied to the end of a rod.

- 223 Two kinds of spring snares are made and used for catching birds: one for such small pilferers as *sucriers*, *moissons*, *gros becs*; another (fig. 36) for the succulent game birds known as *perdrix* or mountain dove, and *tourterelle*. A simple basketlike fall trap (fig. 37) is also used, as also birdlime, on rod and noose. The old Caribs are said to have caught

parrots alive by stupefying them in their roosts with the smoke of green ²²³ ● peppers placed together with burning charcoal in a calabash raised on the end of a long bamboo rod.

Birds are sometimes enticed to the snares by an imitation of their call or by a live captive of their own species used as a decoy.

There is no particular interest attaching to the local methods of ²²⁴ hunting wild pig, agouti, and maniocou. The latter (the West Indian opossum) is often caught by hand; whereas the Caribs, without bows or guns, rely upon their dogs both to find and kill agouti and pig.

LEGEND AND TRADITION

The present-day Caribs have not the long memories of the Scottish ¹⁷³ Highlanders. Anything that happened a long time ago took place, for them, in the reign of one P'tit François. Little François seems to have been, in spite of his name, a very big chief. One would be inclined to regard him as an almost legendary figure were it not that, from all accounts, Jolly John, the present chief, is only his sixth successor. Here is the list:

1. P'tit François.
2. Wakanik (also called Popote).
3. Joseph (mentioned by Ober as alive in 1877).
4. Brumie (whose son, Fanfan, is now about 75).
5. Auguste.
6. Coriette.
7. Jolly John.

Joseph and his sister, Ma' Augustin, noted for having spoken little else but Carib, are said to have been the younger brother and sister of P'tit François. As both of them died within the memory of old people still living, P'tit François himself cannot possibly take us much farther back than the middle of the last century. Fanfan says he was "a big little boy" at the time of Joseph's death. Supposing Joseph and his predecessor, Wakanik, to have reigned 30 years between them (a generous allowance), this would place P'tit François' death at about 1845.

P'tit François is said to have been, among other things, a "manitise" (magnétiseur), which I understand to mean a sort of spiritualistic medium. Before holding communication with the spirits he would request his client to place a full unopened bottle of rum upon the table for the use of the ethereal visitors, whose thirsty "glou-glou-glou" might thereafter be heard distinctly and taken as a sure sign of their arrival and readiness to cooperate. Strange to relate, after the spirits' departure, the bottle was always found as full and intact as ever.

x 824 medicinally, as an insect repellant, for burning, and for soap and candle manufacture.

- [223] Carapate is a source of local timber, but to the present day Carib it is known principally as a « hunter's tree » because its fruit is much sought out by game birds. In the past the wood [396] was used for canoes (see footnote ²¹). Formerly an oil, much used [302] both as a hair dressing and an insect-repelling constituent of *roku* (*Bixa orellana*) body paint, was made from the seeds; but castor oil from the seeds of *Ricinus communis* has now replaced it.

Specimen citation: 128 (T), 145 (T).

MALPHIGIACEAE. MALPHIGIA FAMILY.

Banisteria longifolia Swartz, Prodr. 75. 1788.

Heteropteris platyptera DeCandolle, Prodr. 1: 592. 1824.

Corde Caco, Cercle Caco, Sec Caco.

A woody liana of the Lesser Antilles.

- [283] The stout stems of corde caco are employed by the Caribs as binding edging for cassava sifters, shoulder carry-alls, tambours basques, and mats.

Specimen citation: 3167, 3270.

Byrsonima spicata (Cavendish) DeCandolle, Prodr. 1: 580. 1824.
Bois Tan ²², Moricypre, Moricypre Blanc (6). — *murti*, *muléi*.

This tree is common in moist forests throughout the West Indies and continental tropical America.

- [223] The even-grained timber of bois tan is used for posts and elsewhere on the island for furniture. The fruits are edible and are much sought after by game birds hence bois tan is known as a « hunter's tree ». As its vernacular name implies, there is contained in the bark a tannin which is sometimes used locally [281] for preparing hides. When the Carib hunter desires to hunt agouti [224] (*Dasyprocta* sp.) he first washes his dog (and sometimes himself) x 824 with a potion or « chance » made by macerating the bark of bois

²² Not to be confused with another tree, *Picramnia pentandra*, also called « tan », and also utilized by the Caribs.

1824 **Richeria grandis** Vahl, Eclog. 1: 30. 1796.

Bois Bandé.

This large tree, common in the montane rain-forests of Dominica, ranges from Montserrat to Trinidad.

[314] The timber of bois bandé is widely used by the Caribs for
[832] boards, while a decoction of the bark is reputed to be an aphro-
[224] disiac. Hunters are careful not to cut or slash at this particular species when setting out for the chase for they believe any injury to such trees would cause their hunting to be unsuccessful.

Specimen citation: 567, 1318, 1895.

Ricinus communis Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1007. 1753.

Castor-Bean. — Carapate (from the Carib word, *karapa*, meaning «oil»). — *lamáho* (w), *subúanū* (m).

A native of the Old World, much cultivated and spontaneous in the West Indies and continental tropical and subtropical America.

The Castor Bean is planted in every Carib dooryard and is known as carapate (the name more correctly applied to *Carapa guianensis*). Ricinus oil is now substituted for the oil of *Carapa guianensis* for hair dressing. Formerly castor oil was possibly mixed (in place of the oil of *Carapa*) with biset pigment (*Bixa orellana*) to form body paint. The leaves of the Castor Bean are heated and used both as a compress for internal pains and for massaging the spleen. A special blended purgative tea given after parturition uses castor oil as an ingredient (see *Jatropha* spp.); while another tea, a «cure» for gonorrhea, includes the seeds of this plant (see *Solanum torvum*).

Specimen citation: 570.

Sapium caribaeum Urban, Symb. Ant. 3: 308. 1902.

La Glu, Lagli. — *uélékene*.

This tree is a native of the higher volcanic islands of the Lesser Antilles, and is recorded from Guadeloupe to St. Vincent. In Dominica it occurs chiefly at middle elevations although on the wetter windward side it approaches the coast.

● [223] The white sap of this species makes the best bird-lime utilized by the Carib. The lime is obtained by making incisions on the

trunk of the tree. Bird-limes are also obtained from other species including the immigrant breadfruit [*Artocarpus altilis* (Park.) Fosb.], whose white sap must be mixed with oil; and l'arali (*Clusia plukenetii*) whose white sticky sap is definitely inferior as far as this use is concerned. Sticks (about 1 ½ feet long) for fire-drills were formerly cut from the wood of la glu (also from *Bixa orellana*). According to BRETON (7) sparks, used to ignite dried moss or rotten wood, were produced by twirling one stick in a notch cut in the other. The Hercules beetle (*Dinastes* sp.) is found in rotting trunks of la glu. These huge insects, called *anrehire*, are caught either as a curiosity or for sale to tourists.

Specimen citation: 3362.

ANACARDIACEAE. CASHEW FAMILY.

Anacardium occidentale Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 383. 1753.

Cashew. Pomme Noix. — *ului*, *alui*, *urui*.

The cashew is a characteristic spreading tree of the West Indies and continental tropical America. It is often cultivated for its fruit, but occurs in a natural state in Dominica at lower elevations.

The swollen receptacle of the fruit is edible and refreshing, and is the source of a juice formerly fermented by the Caribs to make a drink. The kernel or nut is eaten after being roasted. From the leathery fruit-coat a caustic and poisonous oil is obtained which is used either as a cure for darts, or as a stain or marking ink.

Specimen citation: 660, 3344.

Spondias mombin Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 371. 1753.

Spondias lutea Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. ed. 2. 613. 1762.

Hog Plum. — Monben, Mombin. — *ubu*, *hubu*, *mubē*.

A tree of tropical America frequent in Dominica at lower elevations. The yellow, pleasantly acid fruits of this species are the «myrobalans» of the Columbian voyages. In Jamaica and elsewhere the hog plum is used in the construction of live fences while the strong but light wood is used as a cork substitute (18).

Clusia plukenetii Urban, Symb. Ant. 5 : 432. 1908. 824^x
Caquelin, Lagali, Larali, Mang Rouge ⁴³ (cf. French : manglier, mangle). — Pomme Chique.

An epiphytic strangler tree of mountain rain-forests ; ranging in the Lesser Antilles from Dominica to Barbados.

Considerable confusion exists among the local names applied by the Creoles to this species of *Clusia*. Kakle or caquelin is the most frequent appellation but the name mang rouge is used at Bellevue, and larali (or lagali) ⁴⁴ in the Carib Reserve.

The white sticky sap of *Clusia plukenetii* is infrequently used as an inferior bird-lime by Carib hunters. The aerial roots are sometimes employed in basketry and the wood makes an excellent fuel for a local type of improvised lime kiln used by both Carib and Creole. For a further use of this species see *Ipomoea pes-caprae*. Specimen citation : 3206, 3251. [223]
[285]
372

Mammea americana Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 512. 1753.
Mamey, Mammee-Apple. — *mastoui*.

A large handsome tree native to the West Indies but widely planted in the tropics for its edible fruit.

The strong durable wood of the mamey is used occasionally for posts, piling, and general construction (50) ; the fruit is eaten raw after soaking in wine and sugar (18), or is used to make an excellent marmalade. In the neighboring French Antilles the flowers, distilled in spirit, make a liqueur known as *eau créole* ; while « the gum, melted with fat, is applied to the sores made by chigoes » (18). [313]
[252]
262

Like species of *Ficus* and *Ceiba pentandra*, this species is considered by the Dominica Caribs to be the home of the « tree-spirit » (see discussion under *Ceiba*). [774]

Specimen citation : no collection made.

Rheedia lateriflora Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1193. 1753.
Hat Stand Tree (67). — Bois Chica.

⁴³ Not to be confused with another non epiphytic tree, *Tournefortia plumieri* more generally known by this name.

⁴⁴ A tree called lagli or la glu, *Sapium caribaeum*, should not be confused with this species of *Clusia*.

- x 824 Leaves of mirette, when pounded with an oil, are used by the
[278] Carib as a poultice for boils or carbuncles.
752] Specimen citation: 3263.

VERBENACEAE. VERVAIN FAMILY.

Aegiphila martinicensis Jacquin, Obs. Bot. 2: 3. 1764.
Bois Cabrit.

A shrub or small tree of the West Indies and continental tropical America. In Dominica this species occurs in woodlands and thickets chiefly at lower elevations.

- [223 The fruits and seeds of bois cabrit are employed by the Caribs
[278] as a lure or bait in snares set for birds, while leaves of this species
755] are an ingredient in a ritual bath used to combat diarrhea (see
Ocimum micranthum).
Specimen citation: 3320.

Clerodendrum fragrans var. *pleniflorum* Schauer in DC. Prod.
11: 666. 1847.

Fragrant Clerodendrum. — Moselle.

This double-flowered plant, originally cultivated in the West Indies, has now become extensively naturalized in the Caribbean area.

- [278] The Island Carib of Dominica inhales the fragrance of the
fresh flower as a cure when suffering from a headache.
Specimen citation: 864, 3308.

Cornutia pyramidata Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 628. 1753.

Bois Cassave.

This small shrubby tree occurs throughout the West Indies and Central America and occurs in Dominica on lower open slopes.

A stain may be obtained from the juicy blue fruits. This is used by the Creoles of Dominica as a sort of blue ink; if the juice is boiled with lime juice a red ink is formed.

- [386 The juice of the fruits provides a blue-black stain sometimes
278] used by Caribs for coloring thread and cloth, while the leaves
are one of the ingredients of a tea used in the cure of painful
retroverted uterus (see *Annona muricata*).
Specimen citation: 19 (T), 869, 3275.

x824 A medium sized tree recorded from Jamaica and Puerto Rico, and in the Caribbees from Montserrat to St. Vincent.

[342] Acouquoi possesses a hard, dense, fine-grained, deep yellow wood which is said to be very durable and which is used by the Caribs to make forked supporting posts for the primitive dwellings known as *mwina*. This species is known as a « hunter's tree », for the yellow pulp of the fruits is eaten by game birds²².

[223] An early use of a tree call *aokakwa* is recorded by BRETON (7) who states that a decoction of the bitter bark was employed for washing and healing sores. The bark of *Antirrhoea* contains just such a bitter principle and since the present Carib name suggests Breton's *aokakwa*, the two names may well refer to this same species.

Specimen citation : 100 (T).

Borreria laevis (Lamarck) Grisebach, Fl. Br. W. I. 349. 1861. Zeb (Herbe) Akwe.

This species is a weedy herb of tropical America and is common along roadsides and in waste places in Dominica.

[278] A tea is made from zeb akwe and this is employed by the Carib in the treatment of colds.

Specimen citation : 3372.

Chimarrhis cymosa Jacquin, Sel. Stirp. Am. Hist. 61. 1763. Bois Rivière.

A tree, recorded from Cuba, Jamaica, and certain of the Lesser Antilles. Bois Rivière is a common species in Dominica particularly at middle elevations.

[313] The wood of this species has an unusual yellow hue. It is used for boards by the Caribs and Creoles.

Specimen citation : 695.

Chiococca alba (Linnaeus) Hitchcock, Rep. Mo. Bot. Gard. 4 : 94. 1893.

Chiococca racemosa Linnaeus, Syst. ed. 10. 917. 1759. West Indian Snowberry. — Branda.

²² See footnote 54.

224

- 224 HUNTING AND TRAPPING**--animals sought; hunting methods and techniques (e.g., stalking, collective drive); description and use of traps and snares; use of domestic animals (e.g., dogs, ferrets); special elaborations (e.g., trapping for the fur trade); hunting trips; economic importance of hunting; organization of labor and division of catch; associated beliefs and practices; hunting for sport; regulation (e.g., game laws, open seasons); etc. See also:
- | | | | |
|------------------------|-----|--|-----|
| Native fauna | 126 | Transportation of animal carcasses | 483 |
| Weapons | 411 | | |

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SUBSISTENCE ACTIVITIES

226 **Fishing.**—The staple food of the Carib was the crab, which they hunted at night by torchlight. They roasted the meat, seasoning it with a sauce called taumalin,³ a mixture of lime juice and pounded peppers with the greenish meat next to the shell of the male crab.

Sea food was an important part of the diet. The Carib picked up shell-fish along the shore. They caught fish with small nets (at night or when the water was calm); with hook and line (the hooks being of tortoise shell); by scattering a certain kind of poisonous wood on the water; or by use of the bow and arrow. The arrows were long and three-pronged; each was attached by a string to a wooden float so that it could easily be retrieved. Harpoons (with separate points) were employed to catch the manatee and sea turtle; the land turtle was stalked. Corrals are mentioned; they may have been fish wiers.

234 **Hunting.**—On land the Carib hunted the agouti and the lizard with dogs, smoking the lizards out of the holes into which the dogs drove them. They also caught birds, using the bow and arrows tipped with cotton or else stupefying the birds with smoke from a poisonous wood.

231 **Domesticated animals.**—Parrots and dogs were the only domesticated animals except when, in historic times, the people kept poultry and swine, largely for trade with the Europeans.

232 **Preparation of fish and meat.**—The Carib took special pains in the preparation of fish and meat, broiling them sometimes for a whole day over a slow fire on a wooden grid 2 feet (0.6 m.) high. They also roasted fish and agouti meat in the ash and smoked the latter for purposes of storage, cooking the smoked meat in cassava juice when they wished to eat it. For the seasoning of fish and meat they used a sauce called colli, which was made by boiling the juice of the manioc with crushed peppers, lime juice, and manioc flour. They made a soup from left-over scraps of fish and meat, as well as from agouti bones. These were boiled in manioc juice with peppers, manioc flour, and oysters to form a strong mixture in which the Indians dipped cassava bread. Apparently this was as close as the Carib came to the typical Arawak pepper pot.

262 The same sources that describe the foregoing methods of hunting, fishing, and preparing meat also mention a taboo on the manatee, the turtle, and all land animals. The sources imply that this taboo was general, a fact difficult to reconcile with the above statements.⁴ It is certain, however, that the Carib never took salt or ate the flesh of the eel and that they avoided fat.

241 **Farming and preparation of agricultural foods.**—The Indians cultivated both the bitter and the sweet varieties of manioc, using the same

³ All Carib terms cited here are from the men's language.

⁴ This discrepancy may represent a difference between ideal and practice or it may reflect a breaking down of the system of taboos. There is some indication that the taboos were followed only during a limited period, as after famine. (See p. 337.)

THE HIGH WOODS

The Caribs' intelligence is in their hands and feet. I suspect their ³¹⁴ own word for incompetent, mabuku, to mean "without feet"; and, just as the typical Frenchman's ability is best described by that untranslatable word, "débrouillard," so the characteristic virtue of the Carib may be summed up in the word "mainoeuvre." The true Carib is neither a hard nor a quick worker, but he is always able to maneuver his way out of a difficult situation in order to accomplish what he is after. "Where there's a will, there's a way" is a motto which suits him well, and nowhere does he show this better than on the high sea and in the high woods.

The high woods (in patois: les grands bois) are those tracts of virgin forest that still cover much of the island's mountainous interior. They lie, as a rule, well over 500 feet above sea level, and it is in them that the gigantic gommiers, chataigniers (*Sloanea*), cedars, rosewood, and other forest kings reach their full majesty. Here the Caribs come ^[313] to saw wood for posts, boards, and shingles; to fell and hew the gommier for their canoes; to cut larouman for their basketry; to hunt the ^[224] agouti, the wild pig, the wood pigeon, and the parrot; to search for wawa (*Rapanea cordata* L.), berries, and wild honey; to fish the streams with bait, trap, and poison for mullet, crayfish, and other varieties.

The young shoot or cabbage of the mountain palmiste (*Euterpe* ^[212] *montana*) provides a pleasant and wholesome salad. It is true the tree must be felled in order to obtain this, but, when this is done at full moon, the bole becomes the refuge of a species of beetle, the *Colandra* *palmorum*, whose fat white grub constitutes a culinary delicacy much appreciated locally under the name of ver palmiste. This is the reverse of the process employed in cutting trees for dugouts. These are felled at the new moon in order to prevent the incursion of borer worms and grubs. Certain plants and trees, such as the male papaya, are cut down at certain phases of the moon in order to make them spring up again as female, that is, as fruit-bearing trees. Wild pineapples, sapodillas (*Anacardium occidentale*) are to be found in the woods, as also the fruits of the balate and balata trees (*Orythece hainianum* and *Mimusops riedeliana*), of the bois cote (*Tapura guianensis*), courbaril (*Hymenoc courbaril*), and icacque (*Hirtella* sp.).

Wild honey of two sorts is to be found: that known as "sûr" (sour) from the small native stingless bee, or "pou lélé," which produces the black wax already mentioned, and the "gros miel" from the (probably imported) ordinary bee in a wild state. The Caribs are fond of eating the white grub or larvae (in patois: cousins) of both varieties—usually together with the honey, raw.

Water may be obtained on the heights from the corde de l'eau (Pia- ²⁷¹ *rose*), a species of stout liana which releases, when cut, a pint or so of cool, refreshing sap.

- 224 Ciriques, a yellow-and-black species of land crab common in and around the reserve, make a very palatable dish. The green worm of the male cirique is one of the ingredients of the typical Carib sauce, toumalin or tumali. They are usually caught at night with the aid of flambeaux. The Caribs sometimes obtain salt from the roasted and ground-up shells of these crustaceans by maceration and subsequent evaporation. Another and odd species of land crab, abounding in the woods and sometimes eaten by the Caribs, is the so-called soldier crab. When small, he finds and takes possession of a vignot, or river periwinkle's shell, exchanging this when he grows larger for that of a bugau (a snail-like sea shellfish), and that again, perhaps, for a lambi or conque shell. Scuttling along among the leaves, a seashell on their backs, their one claw sticking out behind and their two hairy horns in front, these "soldiers" present a truly comical appearance. Like the black crab of the leeward coast, the soldier is a great traveler, and at certain seasons battalions of them are to be seen on the march, going down to or up from the sea.

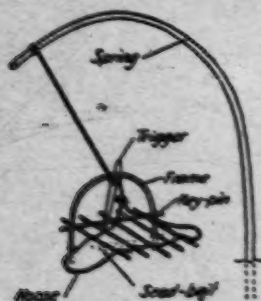


FIGURE 35.—Spring snare for game birds.

Iguana lizards are not uncommon in some parts of the woods. They have a delicate flesh whose taste resembles that of chicken. They are

found on the branches of trees, hypnotized by whistling, and caught with a running noose tied to the end of a rod.

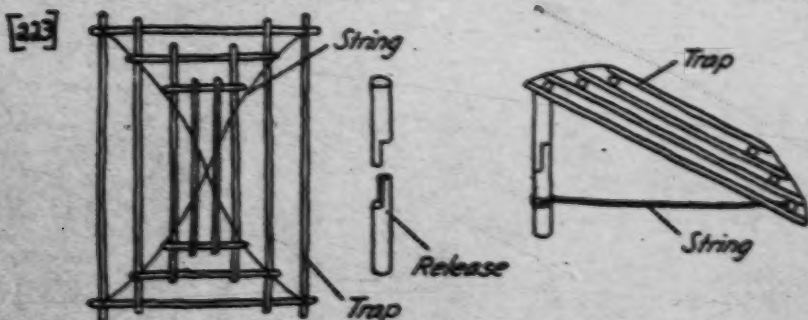


FIGURE 37.—Fall trap.

- 223 Two kinds of spring snares are made and used for catching birds: one for such small pilferers as sucriers, moissons, gros becs; another (fig. 36) for the succulent game birds known as perdrix or mountain dove, and tourterelle. A simple basketlike fall trap (fig. 37) is also used, as also birdlime, or rod and noose. The old Caribs are said to have caught

parrots alive by stupefying them in their roosts with the smoke of green223 peppers placed together with burning charcoal in a calabash raised on the end of a long bamboo rod.

Birds are sometimes enticed to the snares by an imitation of their call or by a live captive of their own species used as a decoy.

There is no particular interest attaching to the local methods of224 hunting wild pig, agouti, and maniocou. The latter (the West Indian opossum) is often caught by hand; whereas the Caribs, without bows or guns, rely upon their dogs both to find and kill agouti and pig.

LEGEND AND TRADITION

The present-day Caribs have not the long memories of the Scottish773 Highlanders. Anything that happened a long time ago took place, for them, in the reign of one P'tit François. Little François seems to have been, in spite of his name, a very big chief. One would be inclined to regard him as an almost legendary figure were it not that, from all accounts, Jolly John, the present chief, is only his sixth successor. Here is the list:

1. P'tit François.
2. Wakanik (also called Popote).
3. Joseph (mentioned by Ober as alive in 1877).
4. Brunie (whose son, Fanfan, is now about 75).
5. Auguste.
6. Coriette.
7. Jolly John.

Joseph and his sister, Ma' Augustin, noted for having spoken little else but Carib, are said to have been the younger brother and sister of P'tit François. As both of them died within the memory of old people still living, P'tit François himself cannot possibly take us much farther back than the middle of the last century. Fanfan says he was "a big little boy" at the time of Joseph's death. Supposing Joseph and his predecessor, Wakanik, to have reigned 30 years between them (a generous allowance), this would place P'tit François' death at about 1845.

P'tit François is said to have been, among other things, a "manitise" (magnétiseur), which I understand to mean a sort of spiritualistic medium. Before holding communication with the spirits he would request his client to place a full unopened bottle of rum upon the table for the use of the ethereal visitors, whose thirsty "glou-glou-glou" might thereafter be heard distinctly and taken as a sure sign of their arrival and readiness to cooperate. Strange to relate, after the spirits' departure, the bottle was always found as full and intact as ever.

1894.] *Aborigines of the West Indies.* 297
In the island of St. John are some rocks covered with 172
 incised figures, which are called the "Carib rocks,"—rude
 petroglyphs without meaning; but undoubtedly of aborigi-
 nal origin. Throughout the Greater Antilles, I cannot
 recall any of these petroglyphs, and they seem to be pecu-
 liar to the Carib area, other and finer ones being found in
 the island of St. Vincent. The descendants of the Caribs 131
 to-day are confined to two islands only, Dominica (which
 was the first land sighted by Columbus on his second voy-
 age) and St. Vincent, the former between latitude fifteen
 and sixteen north, and the latter in latitude thirteen. They 161
 are described in my book on these islands,¹ published fifteen
 years ago, and I will not repeat my descriptions, except to
 state that there are some twenty families of pure blood
 remaining in Dominica, and perhaps half a dozen in St.
 Vincent. There may be three hundred in each island, but
 so intimately mixed with the negroes that their distinguish-
 ing features are nearly obliterated. They dwell on the 361
 windward or eastern coast of either island, in each having [423]
 a portion of land assigned them, which they cultivate in
 common, or which, at least, is not owned in severalty.
 They subsist upon the fruits of their agricultural labors and 224
 the sea, eked out with the scant products of the chase, con-
 sisting mainly of small birds, agoutis, and iguanas. Their 342
 huts are almost as primitive as at the time of discovery,
 being constructed of palm logs and thatched with palm
 leaves. In Dominica most of them speak the French patois 197
 (a legacy from the former owners of the island), and in
 St. Vincent, English; being Catholics in the former and [177]
 Church of England in the latter, as to their religious faith.
 All vestiges of their native religion have apparently disap-
 peared, although they still have a belief in the jumbies and
 wood-spirits of the negroes. They are to-day gentle and 157
 easily managed, showing no trace of the warlike spirit of
 their ancestors; in shape they are robust, well-formed, with 66

¹ See "Camps in the Caribbees," by F. A. Ober. Boston, 1879.

174
101 that they entertained the most remote idea of a northern ancestry. . . . The antipathy which they manifested towards the unoffending natives of the larger islands appears extraordinary; but it is said to have descended to them from their ancestors of Guiana; they considering those islanders as a colony of Arawaks, a nation of South America with whom the Charaibes of that continent are constantly at war. . . . But their friendship was as warm as their enmity was implacable. . . . The Caribs of Guiana still (18th century) cherish the traditions of Raleigh's alliance, and to this day preserve the English colors which he left them at parting."(?) — *Edwards's History of Jamaica*.

174
224 We have seen that historical tradition points towards the southern continent as their ancestral abiding-place; let us make another inquiry. Of the animals that constituted their food-supply, nearly all the mammals were allied to species or genera of the South American continent; such were the Agouti, Peccary, Armadillo, Opossum, Raccoon, "Musk-rat," the Dumb Dog (now extinct), perhaps the Alco, the Yutia and Almique (of Cuba), and possibly, in the extreme south, a species of monkey. Add to these the Iguana, which is peculiarly tropical, the many birds, and the fishes, and we have their entire food-supply of an animal nature; saving that the Caribs are said to have been anthropophagous; though I doubt if they were more than ritual cannibals, at the worst.

174
197 We have seen, also, that the present Caribs of Guiana conform in many respects to those of the islands, and have the same characteristics, preserving their ancient dislike of the Arawaks to the extent of positive aversion. It only remains to quote from a high authority as to their linguistic affinities, to close this summary of points of resemblance. As to the larger islands being inhabited by Indians speaking the same tongue, we may recall that a Lucayan interpreter served Columbus throughout his

●224 If fish forms such a large part of the diet of the Caribs, it is be-
 396 cause boating and fishing have always been a favorite occupation for
 them. The canoes which they still use today are hollowed out from
 the trunks of large trees, particularly the gum-tree, the giant of the
 forest. The word canoe is, moreover, like the word hammock, a
 word of Carib origin, imported into Europe by the Spanish. These
 502 boats are today used only for fishing, but formerly the Caribs—who
 805 are excellent seamen and even have, according to certain writers,
 821 some notion of the stars and know how to calculate time and the
 seasons—ventured quite far out to sea and went easily from one
 481 island to another. They were, besides, admirable swimmers, right-
 ing their canoes when they capsized, while the women kept afloat
 in the water, carrying their children at their breasts.

411 Their weapons for hunting and war were formerly bows and
 arrows, with tips carved from fish bones or tortoise-shell and often
 poisoned with the juice of certain plants. Of an unequalled skill
 from childhood in handling bows and arrows, the Caribs quickly be-
 came as adept at using guns when they were given them. The club,
 called bouton or boutou was also a powerful weapon in their hands.
 It was often carved and the hatchings were painted in various colors.
 As for the war hatchets of polished stone, found in the excavations
 on Dominica /140/ and other islands, they seem rather to have be-
 longed to the Tainos than to the Carib (1). These hatchets bear a

1. Beuchat (H.) Manuel d'archeologie
 americaine /Manual of American Archeology/.
 Paris, 1912.

great resemblance to those found in the Guianas and in northern
 Brazil; there is a fine collection of them in the Museum of Roseau.

532 The arts seem to have been very little developed among the
 212 Caribs of the Antilles, but some crude drawings or petroglyphs found
 on the rocks in the islands which they inhabited have been attributed
 to them, particularly in the vicinity of the town of Trois Rivières, in
 Guadeloupe, and in the island of St. John.

515 Of naturally cleanly habits the Caribs bathed every day in the
 sea or in the rivers before staining their bodies with roucou. They
 have retained the habit of taking frequent baths and this hygienic
 [64] care has protected them from a great number of illnesses; yaws,
 which is very common among the blacks of the Antilles, is rare in
 the Carib population.

137 declined in numbers. Many of the more desirable species are *arbres de chasse*, the distribution of their fruits aided by native doves and forest pigeons. The extinction of such 'hunter's trees' tends to reduce the avian population. The inevitable result is a depletion of both fauna and flora.

177 All these are signs that Dominica may no longer continue to be a natural West Indian reservoir of wild life. The Caribs are also in danger. Negro infiltration and the coming to the Indian Reserve of a church, of a school, and of a police station have led not only to the abandonment of the Carib language but also to the loss of much of the tribe's stock of nature-lore.

[241] The opening up of new land has pushed the forest much farther from the Caribs' homes than it was even thirty years ago. Difficulty in obtaining from the forest those raw materials needed in basketry and in dugout canoe building has brought about a gradual decline of these and allied crafts. One result is that the Caribs now have more time to spend tending imported crops planted in their provision grounds. These gardens, like all others in Dominica, are cultivated without deep digging or manuring on the primitive system of clearing and burning the forest, gathering one or two crops, and moving farther afield. Another result of the retreat of the forest is a decrease in the number of hunters. [224] These men were naturally the best acquainted with those wild plants which could be of use while in the woods. Moreover many 'medicines' and vegetable 'charms' were operative for success in the chase; and the knowledge of the virtues of such plants remained the property of individual hunters or of their families. [824] The loss of the hunter class has thus meant the loss of much plant-lore.

177 The addition of an extension to the Imperial Road (the principal high road of Dominica), which now practically cuts the island in two, will probably complete the process of culture disintegration and of forest disintegration. 491 With these will go still more of the plant-lore and, as elsewhere in the West Indies, the road system may even lead to the extinction of many interesting species.

121 From the above it is easy to see that an ethnobotanical paper on the Island Carib is timely. The value of ethnobotany as an aid in tracing the origin and migrations of peoples and in ex-

[text continues on p. 518. -Analyst]

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
ST13 Callinago ST13

540

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^{x 824}
[262] The acid fruit of this species is edible and refreshing but is apparently only known and used locally by Carib hunters.
Specimen citation: 3357.

Pitcairnia gracilis Mez in DeCandolle, Monogr. Phan. 9: 407. 1896.

Batard La Pite.

A Lesser Antillean species found in Dominica on rocky semi-wooded spots at lower to middle elevations.

⁵⁷⁸
¹⁶⁴
[844]
[777] The fine, fluffy, white scales which cover the lower surfaces of the grass-like leaves are mixed with honey and used by the Carib as a remedy for the common infant's mouth disease called «thrush». The same mixture is employed at birth as a healing agent on the cut umbilical cord. The plant itself is carried when travelling as a good luck «chance».

Specimen citation: 1240, 3054, 3496.

Pitcairnia spicata (Lamarek) Mez var. *sulphurea* (Andrews) Mez in DeCandolle, Monogr. Phan. 9: 393. 1896.

Pitcairnia sulphurea Andrews Bot. Repos. 4 (1802) pl. 249. Batard La Pite.

A species of basaltic outcrops at the summits of mountain peaks of Dominica and St. Vincent.

[278] The leaves of this species are also utilized by the Caribs in the manner discussed under *Pitcairnia gracilis*.

Specimen citation: 319, 1950.

LILIACEAE. LILY FAMILY.

Smilax guianensis Vitman, Summ. Plant. 5: 422. 1791.

Smilax macrophylla Willdenow, Sp. Pl. ed. 4, 2: 786. 1806. Bamboche.

A strong vine of the Lesser Antilles.

● [224]
[278] Caribs employ the withe-like stems in the making of snares, while an infusion of the roots in cold water is believed to be a cure for gonorrhoea.

Specimen citation: 3269.

x824

[224
226
231]

The kidney bean was known and grown by the Island Caribs under its aboriginal name. Although still grown today Caribs believe that the species must not be handled by hunter or fisherman (as this would spoil his catch), nor can plants be given to domestic animals (e. g. pigs) as this would cause them to become vicious.

Specimen citation: no herbarium material collected.

Pithecellobium jupunba (Willdenow) Urban, Symb. Ant. 2: 257. 1900.

Pithecellobium trapezifolium Benthham, Hook. Journ. Bot. 2: 142. 1840.

Pithecellobium micradenium Benthham, Hook. Lond. Journ. 3: 217. 1844.

Bois Cicerou, (Bois) Pipiri, Bois Savonette²². — *alukálua*, *narukálua* (« white-flecked »?).

A common tree of moist forests at middle elevations in the Lesser Antilles from Guadeloupe to Trinidad, and in northern South America from Colombia to Brazil.

[313
278
226
388]

Caribs utilize the wood of bois cicerou for boards. A decoction of the bark is drunk for dysentery while pounded bits of bark are sometimes employed as a substitute fish poison. When rubbed in water the leaflets emit a lather which is used as a soap.

Specimen citation: 3137, 3412.

SIMAROUBACEAE. QUASSIA FAMILY.

Picramnia pentandra Swartz, Fl. Ind. Occ. 220. 1797.

Picramnia antidesmoides Grisebach, Fl. Br. W. I. 141. 1859. Bitter-Bush (8). — Tan, Bois Tan²³.

²² The name bois savonette is seldom used on the island for *Pithecellobium*, and in the Carib Reserve by only a few of the Indians. Species of *Lonchocarpus* or *Sapindus* more frequently go under this appellation. *Pithecellobium* has probably received this name through transfer since the genus is the source of a fish poison, used as a substitute for that obtained from species of *Lonchocarpus*.

²³ Not to be confused with another tree also called bois tan (*Byrsonima spicata*).

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
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x 824 medicinally, as an insect repellant, for burning, and for soap and candle manufacture.

[223] Carapate is a source of local timber, but to the present day Carib it is known principally as a «hunter's tree» because its fruit is much sought out by game birds. In the past the wood

[396] was used for canoes (see footnote ²¹). Formerly an oil, much used
302] both as a hair dressing and an insect-repelling constituent of roku (*Bixa orellana*) body paint, was made from the seeds; but castor oil from the seeds of *Ricinus communis* has now replaced it.

Specimen citation: 128 (T), 145 (T).

MALPHIGIACEAE. MALPHIGIA FAMILY.

Banisteria longifolia Swartz, Prodr. 75. 1788.

Heteropteris platyptera DeCandolle, Prodr. 1: 592. 1824.

Corde Caco, Cercle Caco, Sec Caco.

A woody liana of the Lesser Antilles.

[283] The stout stems of corde caco are employed by the Caribs as binding edging for cassava sifters, shoulder carry-alls, tambours basques, and mats.

Specimen citation: 3167, 3270.

Eyersonima spicata (Cavendish) DeCandolle, Prodr. 1: 580. 1824.

Bois Tan ²², Moricypre, Moricypre Blanc (6). — *muréi*, *muléi*.

This tree is common in moist forests throughout the West Indies and continental tropical America.

[223] The even-grained timber of bois tan is used for posts and elsewhere on the island for furniture. The fruits are edible and are much sought after by game birds hence bois tan is known as a «hunter's tree». As its vernacular name implies, there is

[281] contained in the bark a tannin which is sometimes used locally for preparing hides. When the Carib hunter desires to hunt agouti (*Dasyprocta* sp.) he first washes his dog (and sometimes himself) ● 224
x 824 with a potion or «chance» made by macerating the bark of bois

²² Not to be confused with another tree, *Picramnia pentandra*, also called «tan», and also utilized by the Caribs.

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
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tan in water and to which crushed plants of *Hyptis atrorubens* are sometimes added. When the Carib hunts wild pig a potion is also made but from other plants — doctor bush (*Piper dilatatum*), malbruk (*Piper aequale*), and poivre marron (unidentified). These hunting potions supposedly insure success in the chase.
Specimen citation: 13 (T), 14 (T), 3163, 3409.

824X
224

Stigmaphyllon puberum (L. C. Richard) A. Jussieu, Ann. Sci. Nat. ser. 2. 13: 289. 1840.
Calabouli. — *kaldbuli*.

824X

A common vine of the West Indies and tropical continental America. In Dominica *kaldbuli* occurs in thickets situated on the drier coastal areas.

The strong slender stems of this species are employed by the Caribs as binding material especially for tying thatching rods to the rafters in the construction of the native hut called *mwina*.
Specimen citation: 18 (T), 3356.

[283]

POLYGALACEAE. MILKWORT FAMILY.

Polygala paniculata Linnaeus, Syst. ed. 10. 1154. 1759.
Marcelle Fragile, Esta Fragile.

An annual herb of the West Indies and continental tropical America. The species occurs commonly in Dominica on grassy slopes, fields, and cleared areas.

The aromatic roots of marcelle fragile are boiled and the water thus obtained is used by the Carib for bathing himself or his dugout canoe in order to undo « piat » (bad luck spells) placed on them.

[789]

Specimen citation: 35 (T), 433, 3385.

DICHAPETALACEAE. DICHAPETALUM FAMILY.

Tapura antillana Gleason, North Am. Flora 25: 382. 1924.
Bois Côte.

A large tree to be found in the mountain rain forests of Gadeloupe, Dominica, and Martinique.

1824

Richeria grandis Vahl, Eclog. 1: 30. 1796.

Bois Bandé.

This large tree, common in the montane rain-forests of Dominica, ranges from Montserrat to Trinidad.

[314]

[832]

224

The timber of bois bandé is widely used by the Caribs for boards, while a decoction of the bark is reputed to be an aphrodisiac. Hunters are careful not to cut or slash at this particular species when setting out for the chase for they believe any injury to such trees would cause their hunting to be unsuccessful.

Specimen citation: 567, 1318, 1895.

Ricinus communis Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1007. 1753.

Castor-Bean. — Carapate (from the Carib word, *karapa*, meaning «oil»). — *lamáho* (w), *sulúanū* (m).

A native of the Old World, much cultivated and spontaneous in the West Indies and continental tropical and subtropical America.

The Castor Bean is planted in every Carib dooryard and is known as carapate (the name more correctly applied to *Carapa guianensis*). Ricinus oil is now substituted for the oil of *Carapa guianensis* for hair dressing. Formerly castor oil was possibly mixed (in place of the oil of *Carapa*) with bisset pigment (*Bixa orellana*) to form body paint. The leaves of the Castor Bean are heated and used both as a compress for internal pains and for massaging the spleen. A special blended purgative tea given after parturition uses castor oil as an ingredient (see *Jatropha* spp.); while another tea, a «cure» for gonorrhea, includes the seeds of this plant (see *Solanum torrum*).

[302]

278

752

846

Specimen citation: 570.

Sapium caribaeum Urban, Symb. Ant. 3: 308. 1902.

La Glu, Lagli. — *uélékene*.

This tree is a native of the higher volcanic islands of the Lesser Antilles, and is recorded from Guadeloupe to St. Vincent. In Dominica it occurs chiefly at middle elevations although on the wetter windward side it approaches the coast.

[223]

The white sap of this species makes the best bird-lime utilized by the Carib. The lime is obtained by making incisions on the

13: Hodge & Taylor N, E-5 (1930-1956) 1957
ST13 Callinago ST13

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x824 wound around the left wrist and forefinger. The spindle was set
283 rotating by rolling its lower end (below the whorl) sharply down
the thigh with the right hand. The thread thus spun was rolled
onto the spindle-shank (above the guard) and the process recom-
[286] menced. Cotton thread thus spun was used for weaving ham-
mocks³⁹, head and leg bands⁴⁰, and more recently for mending
clothes. Today cotton fiber is used principally for stuffing pillows
[352] and mattresses, and for calking canoes. However, a ritual bath,
[846] given to the mother after childbirth, utilized coton noir; it is
[396] discussed under *Ocimum micranthum*.

Specimen citation: 114 (T), 115 (T), 2541.

x824 *Hibiscus esculentus* Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 696. 1753.

Abelmoschus esculentus Moench, Meth. 617. 1794.

Okra. — Gombo. — *inékú* (see also *Lonchocarpus* spp.).

A native of the Old World tropics, this species is widely cul-
tivated. It was first recorded from the West Indies in 1750 (21).
and is a familiar garden vegetable in Dominica.

[262] Okra is either eaten as a vegetable or is used as an ingredient
[252] in a local soup known as «calalou». However, a Carib hunter
[224] must not put any gombo in the pot with the game he cooks or
his dogs and gun would lose their power of taking any more game
of that sort. The leaves are used as shampoo in washing the hair
to promote growth. A superstition also exists that eaten gombo
[515] tops will cause one to meet the persons who have been speaking
[278] ill of one.
[789]

Specimen citation: 136 (T).

Hibiscus tiliaceus Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 694. 1753.

Hibiscus elatus Swartz, Prodr. 102. 1788.

Pariti tiliaceum St. Hilaire, Fl. Bras. Merid. 1: 256. 1827.

Mahoe. — Maho (also spelled mahot, or mahaut) Doux. — *uainiu*,
uáiu.

³⁹ It is thought that the Island Caribs first introduced the cotton hammock
into the Lesser Antilles from continental South America.

⁴⁰ Such articles were all listed by CHANCA (69) in his famous letter, and
it is interesting to note that certain of these are still woven by the Caribs
of Guiana.

- x 824 *Vitex divaricata* Swartz, Prodr. 93. 1788.
Bois Lizard. — *hulémele*, *hureúmele* (« lizard leaf »).
A West Indian tree known from Cuba to Guiana and found
in Dominica chiefly at middle elevations.
[313] Caribs make the timber into boards, scantlings, and shingles;
278] and the burnt and powdered bark is applied to ulcers as a cure.
Specimen citation: 1653.

LABIATAE. MINT FAMILY.

Hyptis atrorubens Poiteau, Ann. Mus. Paris 7: 466. 1806.
Ti (Petit) Baume, La Menthe Grand Chemin.

A slender, creeping, weedy species widely distributed in continental tropical America, and widely dispersed in Dominica especially in moist cultivated land at lower and middle elevations.

- Caribs crush the bark of bois tan (*Byrsonima spicata*) together
● [224] with leafy stems of ti baume to form a « chance », a decoction
used in the preparation of a bath given to hunting dogs before
the chase. Thus good hunting is believed assured. For further
uses of this species in teas and ritual baths see *Ipomoea pes-caprae*,
Annona muricata, and *Ocimum micranthum*.

Specimen citation: 13a (T), 881, 4004.

Leonotis nepetifolia (Linnaeus) R. Brown in Ait. Hort. Kew.
ed. 2, 3: 409. 1811.
Gros Tête.

A weed of fields and waste ground with a world-wide distribution in the warm temperate and tropical regions.

- [278] The inflorescences of this orange-flowered herb are made into
a tea used by the Caribs as a cure for fever.
Specimen citation: 3401.

Ocimum micranthum Willdenow, Enum. 630. 1908.
Wild Basil. — Fon Bazin (from the French - framboisin).
A weedy annual of tropical America.

- [226] Carib fishermen are wont to place this plant in the box with
their bait for they consider it a good luck charm. Fon bazin is a